



# Economic Development Element

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## Economic Development Element

### Goals

**EDG1** Add between 131,400 and 146,600 jobs in the city over the 20-year period covered by this Plan, in order to alleviate and prevent economic distress in the City and to ensure long-term economic security and social equity to all Seattle residents.

**EDG2** Accommodate a broad mix of jobs, while actively seeking a greater proportion of living wage jobs that will have greater benefits to a broad cross-section of the people of the City and region.

**EDG3** Encourage increased activity in sectors of the economy that:

Pay higher-than-average wage levels,

Bring new capital into the economy, reflecting multiplier effects other than high wage,

Have reasonably good future growth prospects,

Involve a cluster of businesses engaging in similar activities,

Use quality environmental practices, or

Diversify the regional economic base.

**EDG4** Develop a highly trained local work force that can better compete for meaningful and productive employment, earn a living wage and meet the needs of business.

**EDG5** Create a positive business climate, with high-quality customer service to business and access to working capital and other forms of financial assistance, in order to build a stronger economic future for all Seattle citizens and to nurture entrepreneurship, innovation and business growth.

**EDG6** Ensure that the infrastructure needed to support the economy is in place.

**EDG7** Maintain a competitive edge over other regions in fostering a positive environment for international trade.

**EDG8** Recognize Seattle's cultural resources including institutions, art organizations, traditions, historic resources and creative people as important contributors to the city's economic vitality.

**EDG9** Encourage vitality and growth in the industrial sector in order to support retention of existing businesses, including small firms and attract new industrial businesses and to expand close-in employment and training opportunities for Seattle residents.





**Discussion:** A strong Seattle and Puget Sound economy is a critical underpinning of a positive future for Seattle. A diverse and stable economy can offer long-term economic opportunity and social equity to all Seattle residents. City government has limited ability to influence the economy, and thus must be strategic in its activities and use of resources. Realizing the increasingly international nature of the local economy and the pace of technological change, the City will monitor the economy and will periodically alter and refine the goals and policies in this element in response to on-going changes in the economy. The City's transportation system and City investment decisions on transportation are significant to the accomplishment of economic development goals. Rail, shipping, air, and truck transport of goods are vital links to economic activity, especially import and export activities. The transportation element of this plan addresses these issues in greater detail.

## **A. Labor Force Education, Development and Training**

**Discussion:** While not having direct control over the education of its citizens, the City has a responsibility to advocate actively on their behalf. A skilled and competitive work force is important to a community's growth and prosperity. The following policies encourage employers, employee organizations and education and training institutions and agencies to provide all Seattle residents opportunities for training and retraining. Certain policies related to education and employability development may be found in Section D of the Human Development Element.

### **Policies**

- ED1** Continue to work with the Seattle Public Schools to improve the quality of public education and increase the likelihood that all young people will complete high school having achieved the competency needed to continue their education or enter the work force.
- ED2** Facilitate the creation of coalitions of business, labor and educational institutions, including community colleges, to develop competency-based education and training programs for Seattle community members that are targeted to needs of business. This may include vocational training programs, apprenticeship programs, entrepreneurial skills training, customized on-site training and technical and vocational preparatory programs at the high school level.





- ED3** Support employability development and entry-level and career employment efforts for low income youth and adults, people of color, women, individuals with disabilities and the homeless.
- ED4** Encourage opportunities for people in training or working to meet their dependent care needs.
- ED5** Promote regional approaches to better link individuals in distressed communities with job resources and living wage job opportunities in growing employment sectors (See policies related to Geographic Strategies later in this element.).
- ED6** Encourage the development of training programs for people currently employed so they may improve the skills they use in their current jobs or expand their skills into new arenas.
- ED7** Encourage and facilitate the development of programs for dislocated workers to assist in a successful transition to new jobs.
- ED8** Strive to increase access to literacy development and English-as-a-Second Language programs for those in need of assistance in overcoming literacy and language barriers to employability.
- ED9** Encourage educational and training institutions to provide education in foreign languages, geography and international affairs in order to enable people to better function in the international economy.
- ED10** Offer apprenticeship and other workplace learning opportunities in Seattle City government, with particular emphasis on providing access to low income youth and young adults from diverse cultures and races.





## **B. Business Climate**

**Discussion:** A positive relationship between government, residents, and business is important to the well-being of the City. Business needs cover the range from those of major employers and institutions to small businesses.

### **Policies**

**ED11** Foster a positive entrepreneurial environment for business start-up and expansion and support the retention of Seattle's existing business and major institution base. Focus foremost on the health of local business and, where appropriate, recruit or attract outside business.

**ED12** Support the development of Seattle's major public and non-profit institutions because they contribute to a diversified economy, bring living wage jobs, new activity and capital into the economy, develop and promote advanced technology, and provide substantial public benefits and needed services to Seattle's residents. Balance this support with the interests and needs of the surrounding neighborhoods and other goals of this plan.

**ED13** Support Seattle's artists, arts organizations, and institutions because of their significant contributions to the city's healthy business climate; their role in creating a cultural environment that attracts other living wage employers, as well as tourists, to the region; and the substantial benefits they provide to Seattle's residents and communities.

**ED14** Recognize the importance of the business climate in efforts to encourage the expansion of international trade in Seattle and the region. Consider support of programs to expand export opportunities for goods and services through the city. Also, consider support of programs to improve and maintain international cooperation. Examples of programs include industry-specific international trade fairs, export trade linkages for home-grown businesses, and Sister Cities programs.

**ED15** Recognize the importance of tourism and its support of international trade as well as its contribution to the health of the Seattle retail core.

**ED16** Support the principle of regulatory reform in order to strike a balance between the financial impacts of regulation on businesses and developers, and maintaining an appropriate level of safeguards for the environment and worker safety, consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.

**ED17** For regulatory activities that affect land development, consider ways to conduct permit processing within shorter timeframes, streamline regulations, eliminate unnecessary layers of control and promote predictability in the review of permit applications, consistent with the goals and policies of this Plan.





- ED18** Consider use of programmatic environmental impact statements (PEIS) for geographic-specific plans, or other approaches, which may help reduce the permit processing time and increase predictability for individual development projects.
- ED19** Recognize the importance of maintaining and enhancing the City's tax base, including property taxes, sales taxes and business and occupation taxes, to provide funds for capital facilities and city services for existing and future populations.
- ED20** Periodically assess the effects of City policies regarding taxes, fees, or utility rates on economic development goals, considering the balance between economic development goals, financial health of City government, cumulative debt and tax burdens of overlapping jurisdictions, and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ED21** Strive to increase communication among government, businesses, major institutions and other entities that may provide economic opportunities, in order to: (a) enhance the common understanding of issues related to employment growth, business competitiveness, public policy goals and program implementation and (b) promote partnerships between government and business to achieve the goals of this plan.
- ED22** Strive to anticipate and lessen the impacts of involuntary job changes through efforts to retain businesses in Seattle and by providing those businesses with the opportunity to thrive.
- ED23** Strive to work with the business community and the residential community equitably to identify and promote areas of common interest and to facilitate the resolution of conflicts in a manner that recognizes and respects legitimate differences.
- ED24** Strive to improve coordination of information and services among government offices which affect the viability of business in Seattle. Seek to better coordinate changes to City policies and programs with other jurisdictions within the region, in order to more effectively participate in the development and implementation of state, regional and county economic development goals.
- ED25** Strive to coordinate the provision of public services in ways that implement Comprehensive Plan goals for business and employment growth.
- ED26** Periodically analyze available economic information to understand the City's economic base and the regional economy in order to review and adjust as needed the City's economic development goals and policies.





## **C. Infrastructure and Capital Facilities**

**Discussion:** An adequate infrastructure is fundamental to Seattle's ability to attract and retain jobs, to enhance business growth and use existing development capacity to achieve job growth targets. The following policies supplement the policies in the capital facilities and transportation elements by addressing ways in which the City's infrastructure plans and capital investment decisions can support its economic development goals. Additional detail may be found in these other Plan elements.

### **Policies**

**ED27** Seek to coordinate, where appropriate, City investment in utilities, transportation and other public facilities with business, employment and economic development opportunities.

**ED28** Encourage deployment of improvements in technology and the telecommunications system within Seattle with the goals of:

- a. Equitable access for all service providers that use the distribution network in reaching their customers.
- b. Competition that promotes state of the art services and competitive pricing.
- c. Universal access to citizens, businesses and institutions within Seattle.
- d. Effectiveness based on: (i) flexibility, (ii) system security, (iii) reliability and (iv) affordability.

**ED29** Take into consideration the ability of technology and telecommunications technology to enhance the provision of City services to citizens and businesses when making City investments in communications and computer systems.

**ED30** Encourage the development of technology and telecommunications infrastructure city-wide and region-wide.





## D. Business Start-Up and Growth

**Discussion:** The majority of businesses in Seattle have fewer than 100 employees and most have fewer than 10 employees. Sectors with a high proportion of small businesses include construction, wholesale trade, manufacturing, retail and related services. Working capital and other forms of financial assistance are an important component of business start-up and growth.

### Policies

- ED31** Continue to promote close working relationships between Seattle's financial institutions and its business community. Where appropriate, promote the development of new initiatives and innovative programs to lower the cost of borrowing or to assist small business growth, through increased access to capital.
- ED32** Where appropriate, support efforts to assist small business through technical assistance for business start-up and/or expansion.
- ED33** Recognize that artists make a significant contribution to the local economy as small businesses, and support efforts to ensure that Seattle's artist communities may thrive within the city.
- ED34** Seek ways to improve the environment for small businesses to thrive in Seattle, where consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.

## E. Geographic Strategies

**Discussion:** While the City devotes attention to economic development in ways which benefit the broad spectrum of firms and major institutions, by necessity the City needs to focus its efforts because of the scarce resources available for economic development. The following policies address ways in which the City will focus its economic development efforts in different parts of the City. Strategies and activities vary from one part of the City to another, depending on the circumstances within a particular geographic area. In order to appropriately focus its efforts over the lifetime of the Comprehensive Plan, the City intends to monitor the economy and to periodically amend the Comprehensive Plan so that policies reflect shifts in the economy as well as changes that occur in geographic areas of the City.

### Policies

#### I. Economic Development and the Urban Villages Strategy

- ED35** Strive to maintain the economic health and importance of downtown as the economic center of the City and the region and home to many of Seattle's vital professional service firms, high technology companies, regional retail activity, as well as cultural, entertainment, convention and tourist facilities.
- ED36** Pursue opportunities for growth and strategic development, where appropriate, in urban centers and hub urban villages, which are planned for the greatest concentrations of jobs and job growth outside of downtown.





**ED37** Strive to provide a wide range of goods and services to residents and businesses in urban centers and villages by encouraging appropriate retail development in these areas.

**ED38** Use cultural resources as a tool for stimulating economic development in Seattle's neighborhoods, as these resources provide attractions that can draw people to and enhance public perception of an area.

## **2. Manufacturing and Industrial Redevelopment and Growth**

**ED39** Use plans adopted for the Manufacturing and Industrial Centers to help guide investments and policy decisions that will continue to support the retention and growth of industrial activities in these areas. Continue collaboration with both geographically-focused and citywide organizations representing industrial interests so that the needs and perspectives of this sector can be recognized and incorporated, as appropriate, into the City's actions and decisions.

**ED40** Work with other levels of government and with the private sector to support and encourage the cleanup of contaminated soil and other environmental remediation associated with the re-use or expansion of industrial sites.

**ED41** Strive through efforts with other public jurisdictions to address the problems of site assembly, infrastructure improvements and traffic congestion which may inhibit industrial expansion in industrial areas.

**ED42** Strive to assist industrial firms in addressing capital needs through mechanisms such as the issuance of Industrial Development Bonds or by expanding small business financing programs to assist manufacturers.

## **3. High Technology Clusters**

**ED43** Seek ways to create a local business environment that promotes the establishment, retention, and expansion of high-technology industries in the city. Where possible, look for opportunities to link these businesses to existing research institutions, hospitals, educational institutions and other technology businesses.

**ED44** Seek ways to assist clusters of related businesses in advanced manufacturing, information technology and biotechnology to collaborate more closely with one another and to market themselves as magnets for capital, research talent and high-skill jobs.

**ED45** Seek ways to support technology transfer and other efforts that increase the global competitiveness of Seattle's exporters in advanced manufacturing, information technology, biotechnology and services in cooperation with other jurisdictions and with major education and research institutions.





#### 4. Marine Businesses

development activities in distressed communities.

**ED46** Preserve and support continued use of suitable shoreline areas for water-dependent and related businesses involved in ship-building and repair, fisheries, tug and barge, provisioning and the cruise-ship industries.

**ED47** Support national policies which stabilize maritime industries and promote their expansion.

#### 5. Distressed Communities

**ED48** Strive to address the special needs of areas in Seattle that historically have experienced less economic opportunity and that have high concentrations of people living in economic hardship.

- a. Seek to provide resources to assist in planning for distressed communities and assist low-income areas in developing and implementing economic development strategies.
- b. Attempt to gain State and Federal Special Area designations for lower-income Seattle communities where such designation can confer tangible benefits.
- c. Target programmatic resources, including small business capital access and entrepreneurship training programs, as well as new infrastructure investment toward the economic development objectives of distressed areas.
- d. Support the role of community-based organizations in planning and implementing economic



